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The National Scene

Politics: Nixon Again

Former Vice President Nixon disputed with the White House last week whether President Kennedy was told by the CIA about the Cuban invasion plan before the 1960 election. Mr. Nixon said he had been. The White House denied it and was backed up by Allen Dulles.

The American political candidate might phrase it a little differently, but he couldn't agree more with Job, who wrote in Chapter XXXI, Verse 35, the Old Testament:

"My desire is . . . that mine adversary had written a book."

Mr. Nixon has written a book and the setting is today that Gov. Edmund (Pat) Brown of California, the man the former Vice President is trying to unhorse, couldn't be more delighted.

The reason became clear last week with the first news of the Nixon book, "Six Crises." In it, Mr. Nixon said that Mr. Kennedy, in a briefing by the Central Intelligence Agency during the presidential campaign, had been told

that the CIA was helping to train refugee troops to invade Cuba.

'Rage Greater'

"I thought that Kennedy, with full knowledge of the facts, was jeopardizing the security of a foreign policy operation . . . and my rage was greater because I could do nothing about it," he wrote.

Mr. Kennedy, as a candidate, urged that the United States take a stronger stand against Cuba, even to aiding anti-Castro rebels.

News stories of the Nixon charge brought a prompt denial from the White House. Press Secretary Pierre Salinger, asserting that "Mr. Nixon's account apparently is based upon a misunderstanding," said that the then Senator Kennedy first heard of the Cuban invasion plan on November 18, 1960, in a post-election briefing by the CIA chief, Allen Dulles.

Mr. Dulles, a Republican, backed the President's reconstruction of events. He said, however, that he was certain Mr. Nixon's account was the result of an "honest misunderstanding."

Closing the Case

Mr. Kennedy told his news conference on Wednesday that the White House and Dulles' statements closed the case as far as he was concerned.

Mr. Nixon admitted no error. In fact, he said he had "personally researched the facts relating to Cuba in his book and added, 'My book speaks for itself.'"

There is little doubt, however, that the incident will cause considerable Nixon embarrassment—Mr. Brown's supporters will see to it—during the coming gubernatorial campaign in California. And the political experts had already concluded that the Republican leader's fight for political survival was going to be touch-and-go.